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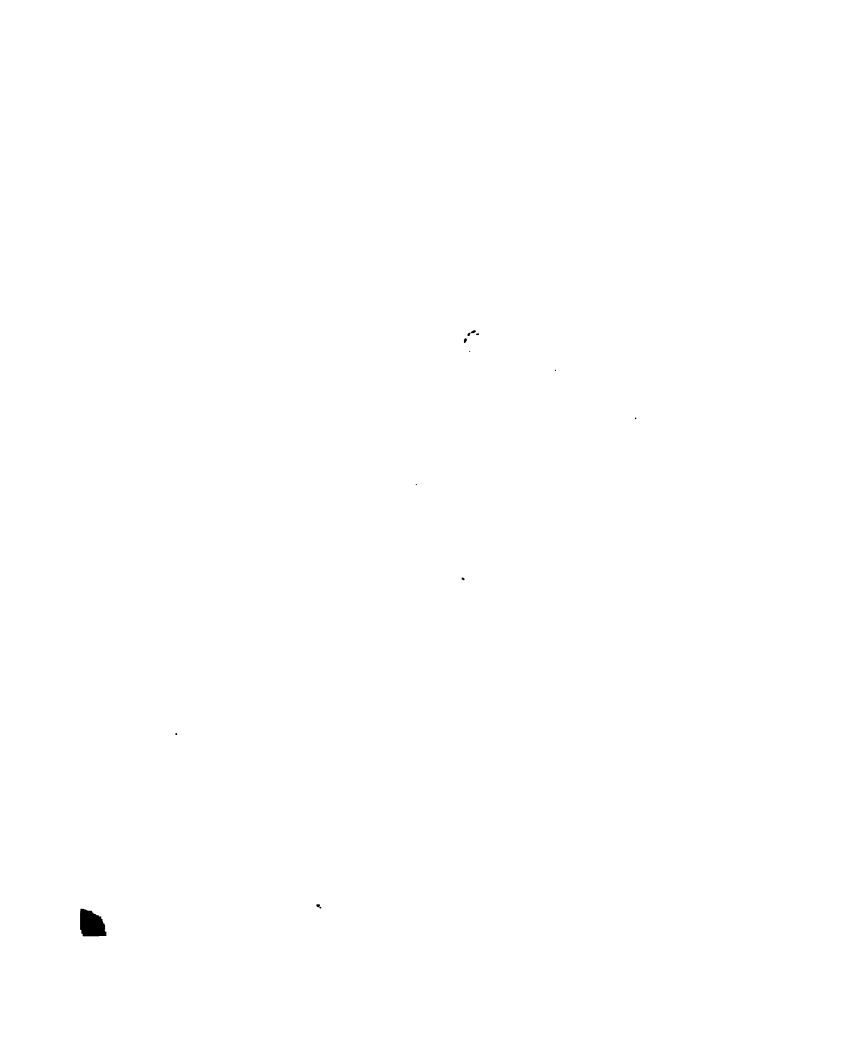
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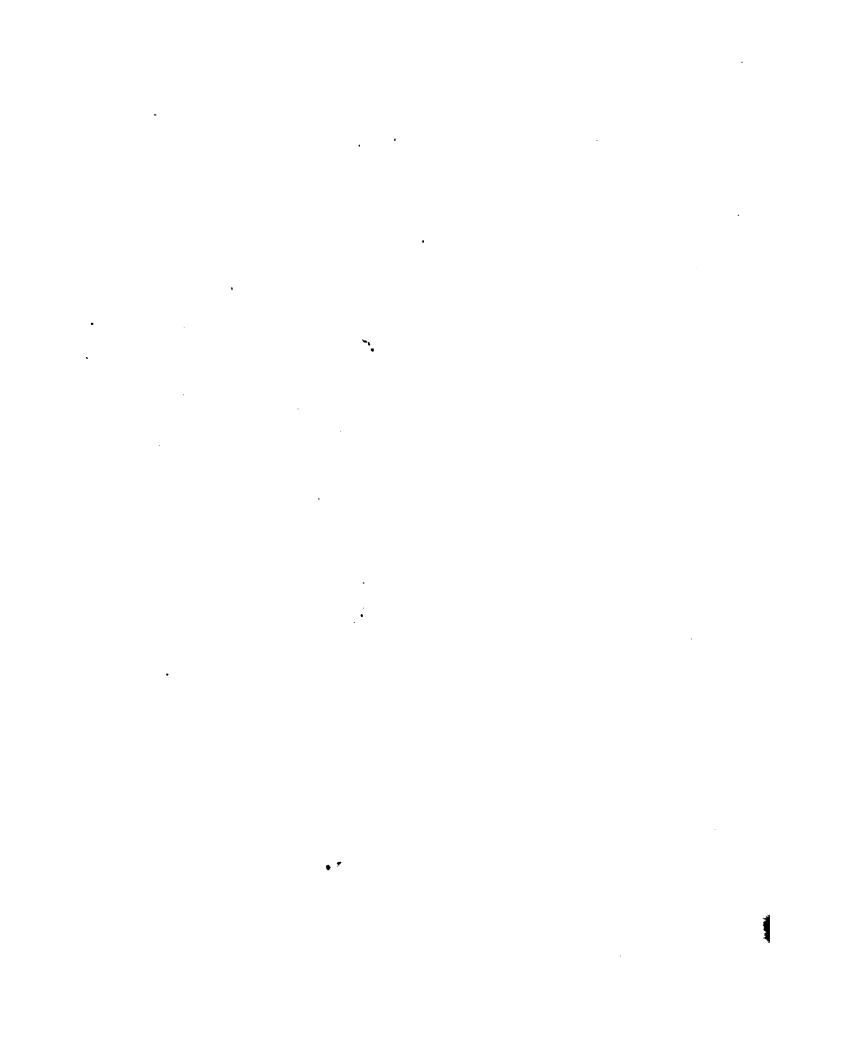
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50
REASONS
IN FAVOUR OF
YOUTHFUL
PIETY







"SPEAK, LORD, FOR THY SERVANT HEARETH."

50

REASONS

IN FAVOUR OF

YOUTHFUL PIETY.

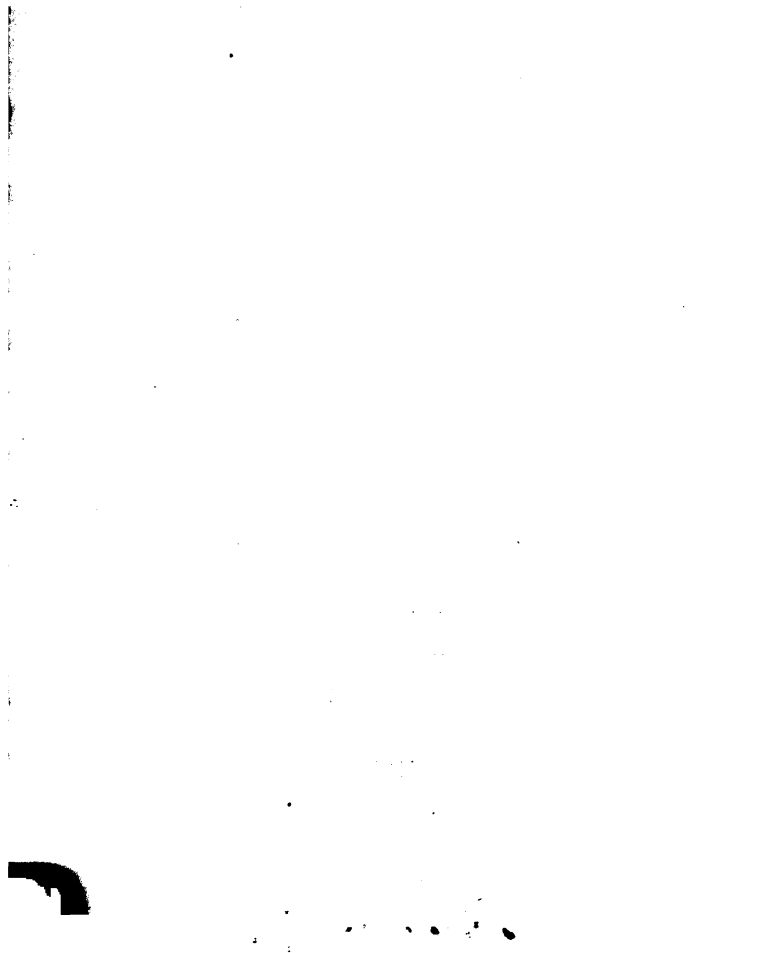
“Religion ! what treasures untold
Reside in that heavenly word !
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.”



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REASONS

IN FAVOUR OF

YOUTHFUL PIETY.

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ADDRESS TO THE READER.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS—

When we look upon *you*, what various thoughts are awakened—what mingled feelings are excited—what wishes evoked! Truly, you are an object of great interest! When we think of your loveliness, buoyancy, hopes, joys, temptations, dangers, opportunities, prospects, and destiny—of the part you will act in this world, and the place you will occupy in the next, we cannot but yield to the tenderest emotions. We think of you as you will be in *yourself*, happy or miserable, honourable or ignoble, adorned with virtue or sullied by vice: “plants grown up in” your “youth,” or rankling and useless weeds;—“corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace;” the

cementing and ornamental links of domestic and religious society, or the disuniting and destructive elements of home and neighbourhood. We think of you in the *relations* you will sustain as husbands or wives, fathers or mothers, masters, mistresses, or servants ; and of the blighting or beneficial influence you will exert upon the family, the church, and the world ; of the joy or misery you will yield to parents and friends, the hopes you will realise or disappoint. We think of your *future* as either saved or lost—a happy spirit before the throne of God, or a miserable outcast in hell ; and we cannot but desire your welfare, and, looking up to God, pray, “Oh that these precious young immortals may live before thee.” Talk of flowers, jewels, treasures, ships, interests—none are comparable with youth. And when we consider that your *future* will be influenced by your *present* ; that your eternity will take its stamp and character from your time, that your youth will give the complexion to your manhood or womanhood, should not parents, teachers, friends, and ministers all unite to love you, direct you, care for you, and earnestly pray for your *present*, in order to your *everlasting* good ? Men are *infinitely more* valuable than cattle, flowers, shrubs,

birds, fishes, gold, silver, and diamonds ; and amongst mankind *you*, dear young friends, are, in many respects, the most interesting class. How, therefore, ought we to feel towards you ? When we look upon a fine ship freighted with gold and precious stones, we cannot but wish, “ May she have a prosperous voyage.” When we gaze upon a choice flower, how we long that it may escape frost and storm, and live fully to develop its beauty. When we behold a noble animal, how we hope that it may grow, and attain to perfect beauty, symmetry, and vigour. And surely every hope, desire, wish, prayer in its purest form, should become intensified whilst we look upon children and youth. We know that youthful piety will ensure your highest happiness and honour, both for time and eternity ; and, therefore, the purest and best wish that minister or friend, parent or Sabbath-school teacher, can breathe on your behalf is, that you may devote your YOUTH TO GOD. In the hope that, by the Divine blessing, that wish may be realised, we present you with FIFTY REASONS in favour of YOUTHFUL PIETY. Dear young reader, may we ask one favour—viz., that, if you cannot disprove those Reasons, you will go to the throne of grace, and say, “ Oh, my

Father, I feel Fifty Reasons should, by Thy grace, lead me to give my heart to Thee. From this time Thou art the Guide of my youth." Or, should this little book fall into the hands of a rebellious youth, who loves the world more than Christ, will you grant one request—viz., that you will say aloud to yourself, "*Against Fifty Reasons I refuse to 'remember' NOW*" my "'Creator' in the days of" my "youth." For such a youth the most earnest prayer should be offered, lest, making a wrong beginning, he or she should come to a bad end.

REASON ONE.

BECAUSE IT IS THEIR FIRST DUTY.

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the FIRST and great commandment.”—MATT. xxii. 37, 38.

“What is the first and great *command*? To love thy God above.”

“Jesus, the Lord and God most high,
Maker of all mankind and me!
Me Thou hast made to glorify,
To know, and *love*, and live to Thee.”

YOUTH owe a duty of obedience to parents, servants a duty of service to their masters or mistresses, subjects a duty of loyalty to their sovereign, children a duty of love towards each other; but God is the Supreme Being, the Fountain of all authority, and the Original of all goodness, and, therefore, He should be loved before all others, and more than all others.

Kings and queens, parents and masters, only derive their power from God ; and if the lower and earthly authorities should be loved and obeyed, how much more the heavenly and highest ?

Every right-minded youth would allow, " I ought to obey my parents in the Lord ;" every good servant would admit, " I must faithfully serve my master ;" every loyal subject would feel, " it is my bounden duty to honour my sovereign ;" and every young person who will allow the Bible, conscience, and reason to dictate, will confess, " it is clearly my first duty to love God ; and that not only as He is the highest, but the best of Beings !" Surely, then, whilst you will regard your secondary duties, you will not neglect the first ; and you who are prepared to affirm, " I do love my parents," are not ready to declare, " but I do not love God." Remember, dear young reader, the path of duty is the way of happiness and safety.

REASON TWO.

BECAUSE IT IS THEIR GREATEST PRIVILEGE.

“Salute Andronicus and Junia . . . who also were in Christ
before me.”—ROM. xvi. 7.

“Wisdom divine ! who tells the price
Of wisdom’s costly merchandise ?
Wisdom to silver we prefer,
And gold is dross compared to her.”

PRIVILEGE is advantage, favour, or benefit. But nothing can yield so much benefit as religion. Is happiness an advantage ? “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, . . . her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her : and happy is every one that retaineth her.” What do men regard as an advantage ? Is it honour ? “Wisdom is the principal thing : therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting

get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee : she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace ; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." Is silver valuable ? " The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver." Is gold precious ? " The gain thereof " is more valuable " than fine gold." Are rubies desirable ? " She is more precious than rubies : and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." In short, is a happy life a privilege ? Religion secures that. Is a peaceful death desirable ? Religion yields that. Are eternal happiness—a crown, a throne, a royal robe, advantages ? Religion offers all. Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. So precious is religion, that if sold at the price of the world, the bargain would be a bad one.

REASON THREE.

BECAUSE IT IS THE HIGHEST NOBILITY.

“ I am thy servant ; I am thy servant.”—Ps. cxvi. 16.

“ A *Christian* is the highest style of man !”

“ On all the kings of earth
With pity we look down ;
And claim, in virtue of our birth,
A never-fading crown.”

“ I AM thy servant.” “ Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” “ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests.” David, though a king, did not account *that* his greatest honour ; but this was his highest dignity, that he was the Lord’s servant. The highest civil distinction is to be a king ; but this is an honour only in relation to mortals, and in regard to time ; whilst religious dignities have relation to God, and belong to eternity.

How great an honour it is to be a prince or princess ! Of all children these take the foremost rank ; but those young people who devote themselves to the Lord are the sons and daughters of the Almighty. Theirs is the noblest relationship and the highest title ; and when they die, they rise to the dignity of kings and priests in heaven. The eldest son of a duke is reported to have said on his deathbed to his next brother, " And now, Douglass, you will soon be a duke, but I shall soon be a king." How truly honourable is that youth of whom you may say, " Behold, a servant of God, a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty, and the heir-expectant to a crown of glory and a heavenly throne !" For " if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." God " will give glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good."

REASON FOUR.

BECAUSE IT WILL PREVENT THE GREATEST EVILS.

“The wages of sin is death.”—ROM. vi. 23.

“Piety has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy ;
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.”

OUR young friends have heard of the “Bills of Mortality”—the account of all who die in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, from year to year. What a sad list ! And how affecting and instructive those records ? Some died old, others in middle life ; some suddenly, others by lingering disease ; some by ordinary affliction, others by accident, so called ; some in gaols, others in asylums ; many in infancy, and others in youth, just ripening into manhood or womanhood. The most affecting of all those records

is the young. Many thousands of young men and women die, in our country, every year, the victims of sin. You might write as their epitaph, "These were cut down by sin, in the bloom of life ; and are the sad occupants of an untimely grave." And in the way to the grave how many lose character and position ? how many break the hearts of fathers and mothers ? how many become the subjects of excruciating and loathsome disease, and finish a bankrupt life by a hopeless death ? Whilst every youth who is a stranger to piety is the subject of pride, vanity, discontent, murmurings, evil thoughts, malignant and revengeful passions, worldly desires, restlessness of spirit, which as so many vultures prey upon and destroy true happiness. Oh, the heart-rending calamities that youthful piety would have prevented !

REASON FIVE.

BECAUSE IT WILL PROMOTE THE GREATEST GOOD.

“ Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”—1 TIM. iv. 8.

“ No, 'tis in vain to seek for *bliss*,
For bliss can ne'er be found,
Till we arrive where Jesus is,
And tread on heavenly ground.”

WE have already considered youthful piety as an inestimable privilege and dignity, and may now take another and more general view of the case. What a remarkable passage is the one at the head of this chapter ; and how strongly it appeals to the self-love and self-interest of our young friends. We know that man is composed of body and soul ; and that he has to live for two worlds. Now, “ godliness is profit-

able unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Certain it is that with God's blessing we shall secure the best interests of body and soul, since our heavenly Father will not "withhold any good thing from those that walk uprightly." Would not a father who was very wise, very rich, and very kind, do the best for his children? And does not our God, who is infinite in wisdom and goodness, and who is the Proprietor of all worlds, say, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him." That youth is well provided for who has infinite wisdom to guide, almighty power to protect, and boundless resources to supply his needs. And such is the advantage of him or her who fears the Lord.

REASON SIX.

BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS IT.

“Remember NOW thy Creator in the days OF THY YOUTH.”
—ECCL. xii. 1.

“*Remember* thy Creator
Now in thy youthful days,
And let thy heart, an opening flower,
Breathe incense forth of praise.

“*Remember* thy Creator
In all life's mirth and glee,
And He shall in thy fading age
Still, still *remember* thee.”

WILL the youthful reader remember that God is the Sovereign of the universe, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, our Creator, our Preserver, and our rightful Master? Has He not the highest authority to command? And will you not admit that God can only require from His creatures what is good? His law is

holy and just and good. If your parents gave a command, would you not obey it? If the Queen and Government published a law, would you not keep it? And will you not say, "I ought to obey God more than father or mother, master or sovereign?" Now, the eternal God makes known His will, and utters His command, when He says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?" "My son, give me thine heart." "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master," says God: "if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" If you knew that one of your companions disobeyed a father, or had broken the law of the land, would you not think his or her case very alarming? But is it not much more fearful to disobey God? Yet every youth who refuses to give the heart to God, or to remember now his or her Creator, breaks the Divine commands.

REASON SEVEN.

BECAUSE THE SAVIOUR WILLS IT.

“Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”—MATT. xix. 14.

“ ‘Permit them to approach,’ He cries,
‘Nor scorn their humble name ;
For ’twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came.’ ”

“See Israel’s gentle Shepherd stand
With all engaging charms ;
Hark, how He calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in His arms.”

WHAT does Jesus, the mighty Saviour, the King of glory, and the Lord of angels, wish the young—even little children to come to Him, that He may pardon their sins, give them a new heart, make them members of His family, the Church,—and enrich them with a title to heaven? He does. How kind! Why, even

the disciples of Jesus frowned upon the mothers who wanted their little ones to have the Saviour's blessing. But, hark, what sweet words Jesus spake! and see what a kind act He performed. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and *forbid* them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." And He did that, that all ministers and good people might follow His example; and to show that the spiritual welfare of children should be an object of tender solicitude to all His followers. No one can tell how much kindness has been shown, and how many prayers have been offered for the young through the example of Jesus. If Sunday-schools have been established, Bible-classes instituted, special sermons addressed to the young, more earnest efforts put forth by Christian parents and others for their salvation—it is all prompted by the example of Jesus, who desires to gather the lambs into His fold.

REASON EIGHT.

BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT ALLURES TO IT.

“ I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon
thine offspring.”—ISA. xlv. 3.

“ The Spirit of God
From heaven descending, dwells in domes of clay ;
In mode, far passing human thought, He guides,
Impels, instructs ; intense pursuit of good,
And cautious flight of evil He suggests.”

IF a tender mother, a good father, or a very kind friend, were to persuade a young person to something for their good, how attentively they would listen ; and thousands of young people would kiss their loving parents, and say, “ Thank you, dear mother or father, for your good advice, and for all your efforts to promote my welfare ; how kind you are ! ” *But, my young friends, the Holy Spirit is the*

good Spirit ; and He tries in every way, and by all means, to allure you to God, that you may be happy in this world and the world to come. All young people in Christian lands, at any rate, have good desires, form holy resolutions, see the evil of sin and the beauty of religion, have many thoughts of Jesus and heaven ; they often weep, and are sorry when they do wrong, and feel happy when they do right—these are all the drawings of the Holy Spirit. He speaks in all these ways, and says, “Seek my face.” And sometimes young people are ill, and at other times brothers, sisters, and companions die ; and in these ways He says, “Give me thine heart.” “For us they sicken, and for us they die.” Dear young friend, will you not answer with one of old, “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”

REASON NINE.

BECAUSE YOUTH IS THE BEST TIME TO SEEK THE LORD.

“I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.”—PROV. viii. 17.

“’Tis easier work if we begin
To serve the Lord betimes,
Than sinners that grow old in sin
Are harden’d in their crimes.”

Who would not wish to do the best thing at the best time? Who would not send for the doctor as soon as they were ill, when it would be easier to remove the evil, and not allow disease to spread when it would be difficult to overcome it? Who would not stop the water as soon as it broke out, and when it must be easier to check it, than allow the flood to come when it would require many men to undo the mischief? Who would not begin to work in the

morning, when the task can be more easily done, and not put it off until noon or night, when there would be less strength, and the work more difficult? Who would not begin to train a tree while it is yet a sapling, and not let it grow until twenty men could scarcely bend it? Who would not break a horse while it is yet a colt, and not allow its temper to strengthen until it became strong and unmanageable, and perhaps some one might be killed in attempting to subdue and train it? And when evil dispositions have the least power, before bad habits have been formed, and when conscience is most tender, is the best time to begin to serve the Lord. As compared with youth, old age is styled "the evil days and the years when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Now, health is in general vigorous, the spirits buoyant, the mind freest from care; but, afterwards, physical disabilities arise which are unfavourable to effort and improvement. If every young reader only considered the value of youth, not one would throw away that precious chance.

REASON TEN.

BECAUSE SATAN DOES NOT WISH IT.

“Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”—1 PET. v. 8.

“The lion seeks my soul to slay
In some unguarded hour ;
And waits to tear his sleeping prey,
And watches to devour.”

IF, dear young friends, you had a bitter enemy, who you knew always hated you, and he wished you not to do something, or to leave somewhat undone, would you not say, “I must just do the opposite of what he says, for I know he wants to ruin me.” Joseph’s brethren hated him, and all their counsel was to destroy him. Haman hated Mordecai, and sought to ruin him. You know if Haman had said, “Mordecai, I don’t wish you to do that, or you should do a cer-

tain thing," Mordecai might have safely said, "Then I ought to do the one, and leave undone the other." The great men of Babylon did not wish Daniel to serve the true God; and they wished Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship the idol which the king had set up. All they desired was for evil, and all they did not desire was for good. Satan hates young people, as well as middle-aged and old ones. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning; and, therefore, if we know what he does wish, *that* we should not do; and if we know what he does not desire, *that* we should do. Now, dear young friends, Satan does not wish you to love Jesus, and to serve God; but he wants you to disobey your heavenly Father, to hate Jesus, to neglect salvation, and to be ruined. Will you do it?

REASON ELEVEN.

BECAUSE CORRUPT NATURE WOULD OPPOSE IT.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”—ROM. viii. 7.

“ But worse than all my foes I find
The enemy within ;
The evil heart, the carnal mind,
Mine own insidious sin.”

ONE of the most valuable lessons every young person can learn is this, that, naturally, the heart is deceitful, above all things desperately wicked ; that their moral nature is diseased and fallen ; and, consequently, they will have to ask for the Holy Spirit, that they may resist not only the devil but themselves. Their natural inclinations are to that which is sinful and foolish. Naturally they do not love prayer, the Bible, *the Sabbath*, religious ordinances, and religious con-

versation ; but they prefer the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. We are told that travellers in crossing snowy mountains become drowsy, have a strong inclination to sleep, from which they would never awake, and that it is only by resisting the natural disposition that they can be saved from death. And in certain diseases patients desire that which would kill them,—they must resist inclination or die. So, in religion, corrupt nature must be opposed, or spiritual and eternal death will be the sad results. Does not nature say, “I would rather go to a gay party than to the prayer-meeting—I would rather read a novel than the Bible—I don’t want to love God and become religious—I would rather enjoy the pleasures of the world.” So you would, and live without God, and go to hell, unless you resist corrupt nature, and yield to the drawings of the Holy Spirit.

REASON TWELVE.

BECAUSE THE WORLD WOULD CONDEMN IT.

“And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world.”—JOHN xvii. 14.

“ Watch'd by the world's malignant eye,
Who load us with reproach and shame ;
As servants of the Lord Most High,
As zealous for His glorious name.
We ought in all His paths to move
With holy fear and humble love.”

THE spirit, maxims, and customs of this world are all against religion. The pride of life requires the smartest dress, and the newest, though the most ridiculous and expensive fashions. “Did I not look well? was not my dress much admired?” is its language. It makes provision for the lust of pleasure, in balls, gay parties, and vain and empty amusements.

The gratification of the appetite is its great concern ; the love of money its ruling passion. Its uniform tendency is to keep the thoughts and affections from God and Divine things, and to fix them upon mere temporal and fleeting objects. It fills the eye with time, and shuts out eternity. It teaches man to live just to gratify his sinful self, and to lose sight of the claims of God and the interests of the soul. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," is a hard saying. If, therefore, you resolve to renounce the world, companions would sneer and be ready to object, "You never can give up pleasure for so dull a thing as religion. What would Mr and Mrs So-and-So think if you began to pray, sing psalms, and associate with pious people." Young friends, if you propose to love God and live for heaven, the world will entirely disapprove and condemn your choice.

REASON THIRTEEN.

BECAUSE EXAMPLES RECOMMEND IT.

“ From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.”

—1 TIM. iii. 15.

“ But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.”

—1 KINGS xviii. 12.

“ Ye, who look for great *examples*
O'er the wide historic page—
Teachers, who with good ensamples
Would the thoughts of youth engage !
To the sacred record turning,
There behold the perfect man !
There the light for ever burning ;
Watch its lustre if you can !
Imitate the Great *Example*,
Humbly, as a Christian should,
Ever like that bright ensample,
Speaking well, and doing good.”

THE examples of youthful piety are the most beautiful and the most valued patterns. What did the late Prince Albert think of young Josiah, when he would

have a bust of that illustrious king on the staircase, that the Prince of Wales might admire and follow the illustrious example? Why did he not select some one renowned for gaiety or beauty, wit, fashion, or profligacy? Because he wished what every pious father desires, that his son, above everything else, should be good. He knew the most beautiful, noble, and desirable example was that of pious youth. If you want lovely portraits, worthy to be set in frames of gold, and most worthy of admiration, look at Joseph, Samuel, Obadiah, Josiah, Daniel, the three Hebrew children, Timothy, and all the young, of both sexes, who have kept up the succession of youthful disciples. The universal Church has its eye upon them—they are held up for imitation by all holy ministers, pious parents, and religious teachers. How beautiful the pattern! What an unspeakable advantage that they devoted their youth to God! And now every good father and mother breathes the prayer, “Oh, that our child or children may be like them!” But the noblest example is that of Jesus. What a study for the young is the youthful Jesus, who was subject to His parents, and grew in wisdom, *and in favour with God and man!*

REASON FOURTEEN.

BECAUSE ENLIGHTENED REASON DICTATES IT.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies unto God, holy, acceptable, which is your *reasonable* service.”—ROM. xii. 1.

“Happy the man who wisdom gains;
Thrice happy who his guest retains!
He owns, and shall for ever own,
Wisdom, and Christ, and heaven are one.”

RELIGION is called WISDOM, because it is the wisest course an intelligent being can take to love and serve God. And if religion be the highest wisdom, they must be the wisest people who embrace it.

“Happy is the man who findeth wisdom.” To devote body and soul to the Lord, so as to secure His favour in this world, and eternal life hereafter, is styled by the apostle, who spake under Divine inspira-

tion, a *reasonable* service. Religion begins in thought : “ I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies.” The very moment the prodigal came to *himself* he said, “ I will arise and go to my father.” “ *Remember* now thy Creator” is the Divine direction to youth. Sin is folly, and begins in thoughtlessness and inconsideration. “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end !” “ My people is destroyed for lack of knowledge.” So soon as people think, they will turn unto the Lord. We have heard of a father who only wished his son to think for one hour in private. He thought ; saw his folly ; and altered his course. Will you, young friends, think, or be guided by mere impulse and passion ; or will you act without thought ? Reason, enlightened and guided by the Good Spirit, would say, “ Be happy ; live for ever : don’t destroy yourself.”

REASON FIFTEEN.

BECAUSE IT IS THE GREATEST FOLLY TO NEGLECT IT.

“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? . . . and fools hate knowledge?”—PROV. i. 22.

“Why will ye folly love,
And throng the downward road,
And hate the wisdom from above,
And mock the sons of God?”

It is folly to do what God forbids.

It is folly to leave undone what God commands.

It is folly to disregard the dictates of conscience.

It is folly to neglect what ought to be done now.

It is folly to disregard one's own interest.

It is folly to neglect the best advice.

It is folly to slight the greatest advantage.

It is folly to involve one's-self in misery.

It is folly to trifle with real dignity and honour.

It is folly to offend God and make Him an enemy.

It is folly to trample upon the blood of Christ.

It is folly to vex, grieve, and quench the Holy Spirit.

It is folly to resist the force of good examples.

It is folly to do what Satan wishes.

It is folly to yield to a corrupt nature.

It is folly to be afraid to do what the world condemns.

It is folly to be ashamed of Christ.

It is folly to begin at the wrong end of a thing.

It is folly to attend to little things and neglect the great.

It is folly to trifle with the soul and eternity.

It is folly to neglect, for one day, a preparation for death.

It is folly to walk, at all, in the way to hell.

Every sensible young person would admit all these propositions, therefore we need not prove them.

REASON SIXTEEN.

BECAUSE ALL GOOD PARENTS PRAY FOR IT.

“And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!”—GEN. xvii. 18.

“Oh, could a parent's prayer of love
Thy destiny control;
Those boasted gifts that often prove
The ruin of the soul,—
Beauty and fortune, wit and fame,
For thee it would not crave,
But tearful urge a fervent claim
For joys beyond the grave.”

ABRAHAM, in the earnest, pathetic, and affectionate prayer he offered for Ishmael, was an example to all parents. The patriarch father felt so deeply for his child that he was overpowered with his emotions, and his full soul could only pour forth the strong exclamation, “O that Ishmael might live before

Thee!" Let our young friends look into a dying chamber: a king, and that king a father, is about to die. How solemnly, deeply, and lovingly people feel when they are going into eternity! They are then more anxious than ever that their children should live to God; and that they should meet them in heaven. Now, this dying king-father wished the best wish, desired the highest good, and gave the very best advice to his son, when he said, "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind." And all good parents long for the early conversion and eternal salvation of their children quite as much as Abraham or David. Oh, did children know what prayers are offered, and what tears are shed, by their pious fathers and mothers, surely they would turn to God. One good mother said she had prayed for her son from the moment he drew his breath; and another, in ten years, had offered 10,310 prayers for her son's welfare. Dear young friends, shall your parents' prayers be answered, and, especially, the pleadings of that father or mother now in glory?

REASON SEVENTEEN.

BECAUSE THE HAPPINESS OF PARENTS WILL BE
SECURED BY IT.

“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.”—PROV. x. 1.

“While they our wisest hours engage,
They’ll joy our youth, support our age,
And crown our hoary hairs:
They’ll grow in virtue every day,
And thus our fondest loves repay,
And recompense our cares.”

How children ought to love their parents! But many do not know until they become parents themselves how much they owe to their fathers and mothers. They cannot tell until then the anxieties which have been felt, the tears which have been shed, the prayers which have been offered on their behalf, and *how much the happiness of parents is bound*

up with that of their offspring. But how can pious parents feel happy while *their* child is the child of the devil and an heir of hell? while their son or daughter is under the influence of a corrupt nature, and unprepared for death and eternity? Parents feel great joy in the health, honour, learning, and temporal good of their children,—how much more in their souls' welfare and the prospect of their eternal happiness! One mother said, "I could never truly enjoy a meal, or have a night's rest undisturbed by anxious thoughts while my children were unconverted. I thought affliction or death might come, and they were unprepared to meet God." Dear young friends, you must be either springs of comfort or fountains of misery to your parents. Will you be the cause of their joy or grief? Will you make their hearts glad or heavy?

REASON EIGHTEEN.

BECAUSE IT IS MOST DANGEROUS TO DISREGARD IT.

“ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

—HEB. iv. 1.

“ Be wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer ;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead ;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time.
Year after year it steals, till all are fled ;
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal world.”

DEPEND upon this, dear young friends, it is dangerous to sin—to incur the anger of God—to bring guilt upon the conscience—to resist the calls of duty—to strengthen the inclination to evil—to walk in the path to ruin—to run the risk of losing heaven, a crown, a *throne*, and everlasting happiness—and of sinking

down to eternal misery. If you saw some young persons sailing into a strong current where many a boat had been upset, and numerous lives had been lost, would you not exclaim, "It is really very dangerous." But thousands, millions have got into the strong current of sinful pleasure and vicious habits, and have sunk to rise no more. If you saw a person playing with a serpent, would you not say, "It is very dangerous—many have been stung?" but alas, what numbers have tampered with evil, until "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." It is dangerous to delay giving the heart to God: many have presumed, and life has proved a great moral bankruptcy and ruin. At the very entrance to the broad road which leads to destruction, sign-boards might properly be set up, "Men-traps and spring-guns set here."

REASON NINETEEN.

BECAUSE IT IS VERY WICKED TO NEGLECT IT.

“ Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.”—JER. ii. 19.

“ What is it keeps me back,
From which I cannot part ?
Which will not let my Saviour take
Possession of my heart ?
Some cursed thing unknown
Must surely lurk within ;
Some idol, which I will not own,
Some secret bosom-sin.”

EVEN a little girl of ten years of age knew that. On her mamma asking her, “ My dear, have you given your heart to God ? ” she replied, “ Yes, mamma, I have done that long ago ; I should think it very wicked not to love Jesus.” An old gentleman, once riding

through a turnpike-gate, said to a young woman who came for the toll, "My dear, *why* don't you love Jesus?" She was offended, and rudely shut the door. But she thought about it ; and asked herself the question, "Why don't I love Jesus?" until she saw it was an awful and very wicked thing not to love Jesus ; and she began to pray that God would forgive her ; and she gave Him her heart. Let any young person ask himself or herself the question, "Why don't I love Jesus?" and wait for an answer ; and conscience will reply, "Because you are very wicked." The young know that it is wicked to steal or swear, or break the Sabbath, or tell lies ; but the most wicked act, and that which includes all that is sinful, is not to love our Lord Jesus Christ. The heaviest curse would be denounced against the greatest sin : and is there a more terrible one than that declared by the apostle ? "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." The worst robbery is to rob God of the heart.

REASON TWENTY.

BECAUSE THE VALUE AND INTERESTS OF THE SOUL
DEMAND IT.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”—MATT. xvi. 26.

“Know'st thou the importance of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory; worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp. Redouble this amaze;
Ten thousand add; and twice ten thousand more:
Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all,
And calls th' astonishing magnificence of unintelligent
creation poor.”

ANYTHING that would be for the comfort of the body—good food, good clothing, good beds, good homes, good water, good air—would be valued. And how precious is health! We do well to take care of it. But how much more valuable is the soul! What

is its worth? Let any young person ask, "Is it worth as much as all the shops, houses, and lands in the town, city, village, hamlet, or parish in which I live?" Yes, and more. "How much more? Is my soul of more value than all England?" Ay, than all the world. "What! would millions of money be a poor exchange? millions of jewels a wretched barter? millions of acres a poor price? the whole world a wretched exchange?" Wretched indeed! For what would it profit if you should be the banker of the world's wealth—if your person should be loaded with diamonds—if you should be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day for seventy years, and then be miserable in hell for seventy millions of years; and know that, at the expiration of that alarming period, your wretchedness was just begun! The soul's happiness should be the first concern—to prevent its loss, and to promote its eternal welfare, the grand anxiety of life.

" Nothing is worth a thought beneath
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies."

REASON TWENTY-ONE.

BECAUSE THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE URGES IT.

“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee.”—Ps. xxxix. 5.

“How short is life’s uncertain space!
Alas! how quickly done!
How swift the wild precarious chase!
And yet how difficult the race!
How very hard to run!”

If we take from the period of human life the season of infancy—the time of old age—the space of infirmity and sorrow—and all the interruptions occasioned by sickness, how short is the time for active service, either in the ordinary business of life or the more active duties of religion. And yet this little period is the seed-time for eternity. If a person had a minute to prepare either to secure the happiness or avoid the

misery of one thousand years—or if their weal or woe for ten thousand years depended upon a single day—how much of that minute or day might be thrown away? Yet even these figures can give us no idea of the proportions between time and eternity. How much of life, then, can we afford to waste? And youth is the time of preparation both for life and immortality. This is the apprenticeship in which we are both to gain the knowledge and power to glorify God. Let youth be perverted or misspent, and whatever may be the disposition of after years, there will be a reduced capability to do good. A blighted youth-time is a dire calamity: and will entail lamentable consequences for time and eternity.

“ No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone.”

REASON TWENTY-TWO.

BECAUSE THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE PROMPTS IT.

“Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”—JAS. iv. 14.

“Lo ! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Secure, invincible ;
A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell.”

SUPPOSE the period of youth be neglected, perhaps a future opportunity may be allowed : and the neglect and folly of life's seed-time may, by extraordinary diligence, be in some measure repaired. And, possibly, no other chance may be given : there are many short coffins and youthful graves. Then all is lost. Life is a blank. Existence will prove a curse. And

the youth sinking, amidst blighted hopes, into an early grave, may curse the day they were born. Or exclaim, "How much better for me if I had been born a lamb, soon to fall under the knife—or a toad, to have been crushed to death—than to have been born an immortal being, and to lose sight of all the ends and responsibilities of that being." It is the fault of youth not to think of death. They look through a long vista, and "count on long years of pleasure here."

But see how many little coffins are made—how many short graves are dug—how many little brothers and sisters have been borne to the churchyard or cemetery—how many mothers' hopes have been blighted, and fathers' expectations cut off, in the removal of their little ones.

"The momentary glories waste,
The short-lived beauties die away."

And, youthful reader, will you risk all for eternity upon a time that may never come to you?

REASON TWENTY-THREE.

BECAUSE ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FUTURE WARRANTS IT.

“Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in the latter end.”—PROV. xix. 20.

“Live, that thy young and glowing breast
Can think of death without a sigh;
And be assured that life is best
Which finds us least afraid to die.”

A POOR spring-time is the forerunner of a short harvest. Little bloom in spring tells too plainly that there will be little fruit in autumn. A withered bud is not likely to produce a choice flower. A weakly infancy is not the best promise for a strong manhood. It is not very likely that a crooked sapling will produce a straight tree. A bad beginning does not usually lead to a good end. A wrong road will not lead to a right point. How important are beginnings,

because of their influence on the future. The probability is, that a virtuous, well-trained youth ripen into noble manhood, and decline amidst matured glories of honourable old age: like so summer days which have a morning of sunshine noon of brilliancy, and an evening of glory. Come events cast their shadows before them: and in youth you have, in general, the outline of the man. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." A plentiful spring is the mother of an abundant harvest. Therefore, dear young friends, strive *to be now* what greater fulness and maturity you would wish *to hereafter*.

REASON TWENTY-FOUR.

BECAUSE THE NEGLECT OF OTHERS COUNSELS IT.

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”—PROV. iv. 14, 15.

“ I saw the Passions’ pliant slave
In gallant trim and gay ;
His course was Pleasure’s placid wave,
His life a summer’s day.

“ And I was caught in Folly’s snare,
And join’d her giddy train ;
But found her soon the nurse of care,
And punishment, and pain.”

THOSE vessels sailing too near the coast split upon the rocks and foundered, and the floating timbers seem to say, “Come not nigh!” That youth venturing upon the thin ice fell in and was drowned ; and the opening, through which he found a watery grave, warns, “Come not near!” That foolish man

adventuring upon the dangerous bog sank beneath its deceptive surface ; but no memento remains of his loss. He is lost ; and that is the warning to others. That thoughtless youth would stroke the beautiful coat of the tiger, and lost an arm as the penalty of his temerity. Alas ! thousands of youth have grown up in ignorance, lived in uselessness or mischief, and died in despair. Tens of thousands have entered upon the pathway of vice, and lost health, character, happiness, and prospects in the journey, and found hell at the end of the road. Thousands, alas ! thousands of wicked British children grow up into vicious youth, early sink under the influence of youthful lusts, finish their mournful career in gaols, asylums, garrets, and hospitals, and become the sad occupants of an untimely grave. The author once saw eleven corpses in one room, the bodies of eleven Sabbath-breakers, who had been drowned the Sunday preceding.



"SO RUN, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN."

REASON TWENTY-FIVE.

BECAUSE IT IS THE FIRST BUSINESS OF LIFE.

“But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ;
and all these things shall be added unto you.”—MATT.
vi. 33.

“Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below ;
May I its great importance learn,
Its sovereign virtue know !

“Religion should our thoughts engage
Amidst our youthful bloom ;
’Twill fit us for declining age,
And for the awful tomb.”

How the Saviour and many young people differ in their opinion ? Whilst all intend to embrace religion some time—and extremely few older persons wish to die without it—how many think they may safely, and even wisely, put it off to a more convenient season !

They say, "We want to see a little of the world, and enjoy ourselves, before we decide for God." What a blunder!—a double blunder! First, they make a mistake to suppose that religion is not our greatest happiness; and then that there is something else that ought to have their earliest attention. But the Saviour directs, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Suppose a boy or girl should say, "I would like sometime to obey my father or mother, but I cannot do it yet; I must do other things first." Or that a servant should say, "I will do what my master or mistress requires; but I must first disobey them, and have my own will." Or an English youth would plead, "Oh, yes, I will obey the laws of my country, when I have done some other things they forbid." Who would not say to any young person, "The first thing you ought to do is to obey your parents, your master, or your sovereign. How foolish to talk of neglecting that which ought to be done first!"

REASON TWENTY-SIX.

BECAUSE THE NEGLECT OF IT CUTS OFF FROM GREAT
BENEFITS.

“If thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace.”
—LUKE xix. 42.

“Weary souls, that wander wide
From the central point of bliss,
Turn to Jesus crucified,
Fly to those dear wounds of His :
Sink into the purple flood :
Rise into the life of God.”

THE mother of a great man, Dr Jabez Bunting, once remarked to her son, “I do not know what you think of it, Jabez, but to me it seems an awful thing that, after having been carried to the house of God, you should now be excluded by your own fault.” Meaning that, by not connecting himself with the Church, he was cutting himself off from many privileges by his

own act and deed. But a young person who has not given the heart to God cannot enter the Church, the family of Christ ; and are, by their own act and deed, cut off from all the privileges of the family. Without a change of heart young people may be professors of religion, and sometimes have their names on the Church's outward roll ; but the Saviour declares, except we be born again we cannot see nor enter the kingdom of heaven—*i.e.*, the Church. They have no title to its blessings who have no right to its membership. They lose the favour of God, the sweet peace of a renewed heart, the guidance and comfort of the Holy Spirit—all the blessings promised in the Bible : they have neither title to nor meetness for heaven, and no foretaste of its joys. What a blessing it must be to be a subject of the kingdom of heaven, to have the King for a friend, the blessing of the kingdom for their portion, the power of the kingdom for their protection. But to refuse God the heart, is to be cut off from all this good.

REASON TWENTY-SEVEN.

BECAUSE IT IS PARTICULARLY PLEASING TO GOD.

“I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.”—PROV. viii. 17.

“When we devote our youth to God
'Tis pleasing in His eyes ;
A flower, when offer'd in the bud,
Is no vain sacrifice.”

GOD has declared, “All souls are mine, the soul of the father and the soul of the son.” And the apostle affirms of that Great and Good Being, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” And yet Jehovah says, “I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.” Is not that a special encouragement to the young? and does it not prove that an early consecration is particularly pleasing to Him? Such we may

reasonably conclude to be the case. An early conversion is the most pleasing, the most valuable, the most desirable of all conversions. A father is glad when a child recovers from sickness ; but would he not have preferred the continued good health of his dear boy or girl ? A parent would rejoice to see his son saved from drowning ; but he would rather he had never been in danger. And so our heavenly Father would much rather that His children did not serve Satan at all ; did not devote any portion of their precious life to the service of sin ; and that they might be spared the bitter consequences of transgression.

REASON TWENTY-EIGHT.

BECAUSE GOD HAS SPECIALLY PROMISED HIS HOLY
SPIRIT TO EFFECT IT.

“I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”—ISA. xliv. 3-5.

“The Holy Ghost Thou dost impart,
To sanctify and teach the heart;
We seek His grace with earnest mind,
For they who early seek shall find.”

In the original covenant which Jehovah made with Abraham, He said, “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.” And he required that all the children of Jewish parents should be admitted to that covenant. Under the prophetic dispensation, the Lord pro-

mised, "I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." For what great end? "And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." And when Peter, on the day of Pentecost, announced the provisions of a new dispensation, he was authorised to say, "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and your children." The precious words of Jesus concerning children would be fresh in the mind of the apostle; and he would know that the little ones could not have the Saviour's blessing unless they had an interest in His death. In fact, the blessing of Jesus is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Will our dear young friends resist the good Spirit, and seek to frustrate the design of Jesus to secure their welfare?

REASON TWENTY-NINE.

BECAUSE IT IS TO BRING SPECIAL HONOUR TO GOD.

“ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies.”—Ps. viii. 2.

“ Out of the mouth of babes
And sucklings Thou canst draw
Surprising honours to Thy name,
And strike the world with awe.”

THE Psalmist, having adored and magnified the excellency of the Lord, adduces a striking instance of the wisdom and power of God, saying, “ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” And this prophecy received one fulfilment when the children cried in the temple and said, “ Hosanna to the son of David.” The chief priests and scribes were astonished and dis-

pleased. They could not, or would not, see the Divine character of Jesus, and pay Him the homage which was His due. But the children worshipped Him, and made the temple ring with their gladsome hosannas. They acknowledged and magnified the son of David. The mortified chief priests said unto Him, "Hearest thou what they say?" And Jesus said unto them, "Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise?" And in how many instances have children been witnesses for God when their parents have been silent! How many children of prayerless parents have loved prayer! And in many instances children have won to God hardened and drunken parents and friends, who seemed to be inaccessible to all other instrumentality. Oh, may God pour out His Spirit upon all the Sabbath-schools of England; and raise up witnesses for Himself in thousands of the godless families of our land!

REASON THIRTY.

BECAUSE GOD PUTS SPECIAL HONOUR UPON IT.

“ And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”—ISA. liv. 13.

“ Those who, with devoted mind,
Seek in early life my face,
Shall my lasting favour find,
And enjoy my richest grace ;
Early, then, while yet I wait,
Seek me, ere it be too late.”

WE may instance this in one particular. The greatest honour that God puts upon any man is to make him a minister of Jesus Christ. This is a greater honour than to be a merchant, an officer, a prime minister, or a king. Ministers are God's ambassadors, stars in the right hand of the Son of God, the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. The glory of Christ ! what a remarkable expression. What could

more strikingly represent the honour of the ministry? Men may prefer business, with its chances of money-making luxury and pleasure. But often that which is of low esteem with man is of great account with God. No office has so great opportunities of promoting God's glory—of furthering God's grandest work—winning souls. And let our young friends remember the Great Master generally selects His ministers from the ranks of youthful Christians. A very large proportion of these most honoured servants of God were converted in early life. In some instances God will take an instrument out of Satan's hands and use it for His glory: but it would seem the Divine rule is to employ, in the highest service of the Church, those agents who have been the least defiled by sin.

REASON THIRTY-ONE.

BECAUSE THE NEGLECT OF IT HAS FILLED OTHERS
WITH REGRET.

“How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof.”

—PROV. v. 12.

“Youth stops at first its wilful ears
To Wisdom's prudent voice ;
Till now, arrived to riper years,
Experienced age, worn out with cares,
Repents its earlier choice.”

ONE of the most frequent lamentations which ministers and others who visit the sick and dying hear is—
“How sad that so much of my life has been devoted to the world and Satan ! The best part of my time has been lost—thrown away. Years that I might have devoted to God and to my eternal advantage have been worse than a blank, alas ! filled with sin and mischief.” “Oh, that I could live over again,”

has been the vain wish of thousands. One exclaimed, "I would willingly give ten thousand pounds to be ten years younger." If we listen to the solemn and sorrowful utterances of every one of the thousands and tens of thousands who were not converted early in life, we shall find the universal regret is, that they did not love God sooner. It seems an overwhelming sorrow that ten, twenty, or thirty years of life were sacrificed to sin and Satan—that so much less has been done for God than might have been done. That so much evil has been committed—and so many injured by bad precept and example. It is not too much to say that thousands of God's people would willingly weep tears of blood if they could wash out the misdoings of the past, and have the chance, which worlds cannot buy, of living a holier and more useful life.

REASON THIRTY-TWO.

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING IT ARE
APPALLING.

“Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth
evil.”—ROM. ii. 9.

“How, for some moments’ vain delights,
We will embitter years;
And in our youth lay up for age
Only remorse and tears.”

APPALLING! what more appalling than not to devote our youth to God? Do we delay doing so for one year; who can estimate the loss or tell the calamity of that one year denied to God and spent in sin! Some tradesmen say, “This has been a bad year for business;” others say, “I have lost ten thousand pounds this year;” but those

who have withheld another year from God and life's great purpose, and have given another twelve months to sin, the world, and Satan, have lost far more than thousands of pounds. If all the good that is left undone—all the true happiness that is sacrificed—all the mischief that is committed—all that is done to fill the mind with after regrets, to embitter a death-bed, to darken the account that must be laid before the Judge of the whole earth—all that must entail loss for ever, in one year, could be told, who would dare to throw away an additional twelve-months? And yet, alas! there are thousands of young people who multiply all these startling items by fifteen, sixteen, and twenty years! Alarming thought, that twenty years out of a short life should be thrown away! And remember, dear young friend, every day you withhold your heart from God is worse than a blank.

“Time lost is suicide, where more than blood is spilt.”

REASON THIRTY-THREE.

BECAUSE IT MOST FULLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE
GLADNESS OF A DYING HOUR.

“ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be
like his! ”—NUMB. xxiii. 10.

“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven.
Virtue alone has majesty in death.”

How solemn is a dying hour ! That is the winding
up of life, the close of the moral probation ; and it is
interesting or mournful, peaceful or restless, happy or
miserable, just as life has been useful or useless, well-
spent or misspent. Life is unspeakably important
viewed in relation to eternity ; and every word, to-
gether with every action, will appear important in a
dying hour. In that solemn moment the soul seri-

ously ponders the past, and thoughtfully anticipates the future. Every well-spent year, month, day, or moment will then form a sunny memory—every neglect, unfaithfulness, and sin, will be a dark recollection. The happiest death is, consequently, that which closes the most useful life. Who would not envy, in a dying hour, that Christian who, looking back upon the morning, the noon, and the evening of life, can say, like good Obadiah, “But I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth!” Oh, how golden the sunset of that day which has not been darkened by any cloud of evil! One little boy of about eleven could take his New Testament from underneath his dying pillow and point, for his last testimony, to Paul’s unspeakably important words: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.”

REASON THIRTY-FOUR.

BECAUSE IT WILL HEIGHTEN THE SOUL'S HAPPINESS IN
HEAVEN.

“He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”—GAL. vi. 8.

“What here I seek, shall there abound ;
For where the heirs of glory dwell
The worth of holiness is found
Exceeding great, unspeakable.”

ALL will be happy in heaven, but all will not be equally happy ; all will be honourable, but not equally honourable. The thrones, the robes, the crowns will vary much. Yes, the happiness of heaven, in its measure, will be determined by the degree of faithfulness here. We shall do well to ponder the important teaching of Scripture in reference to heaven. “He that soweth plentifully shall reap also plenti-

fully ; and he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn *many* to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." One young person was sorrowful in her dying hour, and said, "I have been thinking mine will be a starless crown ; I do not know of one whom I have won for God." How happy—unspeakably happy, then, are they who, by the grace of God, make the whole of life a seed-time for eternity, who have been mercifully saved from sowing what some people call "wild oats." Alas, those wild oats will grow ; and those who have sown two kinds will be the husbandmen of two, but opposite crops. The evil good people did before their conversion is one of their bitterest regrets. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

REASON THIRTY-FIVE.

BECAUSE THE HEART OFFERED IN YOUTH IS OF THE
GREATEST VALUE.

“Your *lamb* shall be without blemish.”—EXOD. xii. 5.

“Grace is a plant, where’er it grows,
Of pure and heavenly root ;
But fairest in the *youngest* shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.”

How strikingly this was represented under the law,
“They shall take to them every man a lamb. . . .
Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the
first year.” Is the question asked, Why not a sheep,
or an animal of greater pecuniary value? The an-
swer is, The lamb, from its age, tenderness, and
innocency, was regarded as the best—from the *first*
it might be devoted to God, and to no other purpose.
A beautiful emblem of youthful piety. Now, the

sacrificed individual has the most of innocence—it is the freest from actual sin—there is the least possible taint of evil upon it. The mind, to a great extent, is undarkened by impure thoughts—the soul unpolluted by foul imaginations—there are fewer of the sproutings of the bitter root of a fallen nature—least of malice, bitterness, unkindness, selfishness, and pride. Then the conscience is most tender—the will most pliable—the affections least polluted. And if the offering be made now, the whole of life may be devoted to its highest, noblest, happiest, most righteous purpose. The sacrifice may be wholly the Lord's: and not—as in the case of those who are converted later in life—one portion given to Satan, another, and often the smaller part, devoted to God. God would rather not share with the devil. What young person would not give God the best?

REASON THIRTY-SIX.

BECAUSE NOT TO DEVOTE YOUTH TO GOD IS A GREAT
INSULT TO HIM.

“What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?”—JOB xxi. 15.

“Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee!
Ashamed of Thee, whom angels praise,—
Whose glories shine through endless days!”

THE Divine Being says, “My Son, give me thine heart.” “Seek ye my face.” “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” And the world says, “No, don’t.” Satan, that he may not shock the judgment, and offend the conscience of youth, speaks more mildly, and says, “Not yet—don’t obey God just now. ‘Go thy way for this time—when have a more convenient season I will call for thee!’”

Even the youngest have to decide ; and decision implies thought. Now, if there be choice in the matter, it is a fearful sin, and a great insult to Almighty God to prefer the world before Him and His service. And if it be said, "But there is no thought about it," it makes the matter worse not to deem the Divine claims and religion worth a thought, but heedlessly to be carried in the wrong direction. Young persons think about dress and pleasure—will you not think about God? Actions speak louder than words ; and that youth who refuses to pray, love God, and keep His commandments, deliberately says, "I prefer the world and its pleasures before religion ; and I choose rather to follow my sinful inclination than to yield to conscience and the Holy Spirit. I would rather have the world for my portion than God." Oh, youthful reader, that you may not see *your* face in this glass, "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God !"

REASON THIRTY-SEVEN.

BECAUSE THE DEFENCELESSNESS OF YOUTH
REQUIRES IT.

“He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in
His bosom.”—ISA. xl. 11.

“Oh, fragile youth !
I feel for thee,—
Thy beauty is but vanity ;
A wily world thy peace may shake,
False friends thy bounding spirit break,
Time’s fingers rude bedim thine eye,
And creature comforts droop and die.”

To our young friends we may say, “You are lambs.”
And this character suggests not only innocence and
loveliness, but unsuspiciousness and defencelessness.
How much a lamb needs a shepherd to care for it
and defend it ! How much youth needs a guide to
lead it ! You know little of the wiles of the devil,

the allurements of the world, or the danger of early companionships. Others know that the whole journey of life is beset with dangers ; that snares are on every hand : they fear for the little ones, and are anxious that they may not go astray. In Eastern countries lions and other beasts of prey would often devour the lambs if they were not well defended. And everywhere there are human wolves to destroy children. Their only safety is found by their Shepherd's side, and under His guidance. They cannot take care of themselves. Life to them is an untried and dangerous path ; and they especially need to look up to God and say, " My Father, Thou art the Guide of my youth." Jesus knew the helplessness of the little ones ; and therefore He has kindly said, " He will gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom." It is only then that they are safe.

REASON THIRTY-EIGHT.

BECAUSE THE PRAYERS OF THE YOUNG DEMAND IT.

“Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—MATT. vi. 9, 10.

“O God ! how often hath Thine ear
To me in *willing* mercy bent !
Help me in all Thy paths to go,
And now, as e’er, my voice attend,
And gladden me with answers mild,
And commune, Father, with Thy child !”

IF any should say to the young, “My dear friends, I advise you not to pray,” would not the utmost surprise be felt ? and would not our youth reply, “How very wicked it would be not to pray ?” And if another should say, “My youthful friends, I would exhort you to pray, but don’t expect any answer to your prayers, and do not think of living or acting in ac-

cordance with your petitions," would you not exclaim, "What wicked advice!" Yes, both would be bad. And if so, young people will admit we ought to be consistent with our prayers, or not pray at all. Certainly. Then, have you not said, from the time you were able to lisp—on the altar of a mother's knee—beside your bed, twice every day since you were able to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Now, that kingdom must first come in our own hearts: that will must first be done in the consecration of ourselves to God. And if children and young people will be consistent with their own prayers, they will seek to give themselves to God. Or, if not, they will give the lie to all their supplications; and, in effect, say, "We have offered thousands of prayers, but we did not mean what we said; and we don't desire what we have asked." Awful mockery!

"I OFTEN say my prayers;
But do I ever pray?
Or do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?"

REASON THIRTY-NINE.

BECAUSE ALL GOOD CHILDREN DESIRE IT.

“Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children.”—Ps. xc. 16.

“Great Saviour, who didst condescend
Young children in Thine arms to take,
Still prove Thyself the children’s Friend,
And save them for Thy mercy’s sake.”

THERE are thousands of children in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, America, India, China, Africa, and the islands of the seas, who have given themselves to God. Some who have been won from Mohammedanism and various forms of idolatry; and vast numbers who, as the fruit of Sabbath-school training, love Jesus. These are all lambs of Christ’s fold—how goodly the number; and how lovely the sight to the Great Shepherd, who can see every in-

dividual of the fold at one time! These all know how good and pleasant the pasture is. What a precious privilege it is to have a saving interest in the blood of Jesus, and to be able to rejoice in the hope of heaven! These all wish and pray that young people everywhere may turn to the Lord. They feel religion to be such a good thing for youth, that they long that others may partake the heavenly gift. Thousands of prayers are offered, the burden of which is, "Oh, that my brothers and sisters may be converted! Lord, save the children of every land, that we may all meet in heaven." In some places young people hold prayer-meetings to pray especially for the young. Dear young reader, shall all their petitions be answered in your salvation? And we trust that every converted child will daily pray that God may pour out His Holy Spirit on all the children in the world.

REASON FORTY.

BECAUSE DELAY STRENGTHENS THE NATURAL
INDISPOSITION TO RELIGION.

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day ; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”—
HEB. iii. 13.

“ I will to-morrow, that I will,
I will be sure to do it ;
To-morrow comes, to-morrow goes,
And still thou art to do it.

“ Thus still repentance is deferr’d
From one day to another :
Until the day of death is come,
And judgment is the other.”

“ How strange,” do you exclaim, “ that those whose race is almost run—who stand on the verge of eternity—who must soon be either saved or lost for ever, should not give every attention, and put forth every

effort to escape hell, and get to heaven!" "Surely," you may be ready to say, "it cannot be." Alas! young friends, such is the painful, the awful fact. One said, with the utmost indifference, "I have seventy years' accounts to make up, and I do not know how to set about them." And though such neglect is strange in one sense, it is not in another. In the indifference of many old people we see the fulfilment of Scripture. The Bible speaks of hardness through the deceitfulness of sin. Here is the proof. It speaks of Ephraim being joined to idols, and says, "Let him alone." And here is the illustration. Conscience and the Spirit of God now leave him to himself. And hence, the nearer sinners approach hell, the less they seem to dread it. Life has been wasted—all Divine purposes of grace frustrated—the Holy Spirit grieved—the blood of the Saviour trampled under foot; and now they pass away to reap the fruit of their doings. In every unconverted old man and woman let the young see how dangerous it is to delay.

REASON FORTY-ONE.

BECAUSE CHRISTIANITY PROVIDES FOR IT.

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”—GEN. xvii. 7.

“Jesus the ancient faith confirms,
To our great father given ;
He takes our children to His arms,
And calls them heirs of heaven.

“O God, how faithful are Thy ways !
Thy love endures the same ;
Nor from the promise of Thy grace
Blots out our children’s name.”

God expects that the young will love Him—that they will remember Him, seek Him, become lambs of His fold, members of His Church. Children were to have their names enrolled in the first covenant, and to become partakers of its benefits. And Jesus has

confirmed the covenant which was given to Abraham, and calls children heirs of heaven. The provisions and promises of the gospel are for them. In this particular Christianity differs from all false systems of religion. In the systems of ancient heathenism children were not cared for ; and in the modern systems the little ones are treated with the utmost cruelty. Infanticide forms part of the Confusiasm of China, the Hindooism of India, and the wretched superstitions of barbarous tribes. Barrow relates that about four thousand children are annually thrown into the streets of Pekin, to be devoured by dogs and swine ; and then to be carried in the death-cart, and buried in a pit outside the city. And who can tell the tens of thousands who have been thrown into the supposed sacred rivers of India as sacrifices to the gods ? Surely the young should show their deep gratitude for Christianity by embracing and seeking to extend its benefits to the youth of other lands.

REASON FORTY-TWO.

BECAUSE EVERY SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF RELIGION SHOWS
THE PROPRIETY OF IT.

“ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are
peace.”—PROV. iii. 17.

“ To me, O Lord, be Thou ‘The *Way*,’
To me be Thou ‘The Truth;’
To me, my Saviour, be ‘The Life,’
Thou Guardian of my youth.

“ So shall that *Way* be my delight,
That Truth shall make me free ;
That Life shall raise me from the dead,
And then I’ll live to Thee.”

THE Scriptures represent religion as a *kingdom*; and who would not at once become a subject, and enjoy its privileges? Is it wise to stand outside for a few years, and to sacrifice its blessings? As a *way*—the way to happiness and heaven—the only safe and

right way ; and is it not wise at once to get upon it, and not to walk a long distance on a wrong and dangerous road, and then have to exclaim, "Alas ! every step has been wrong ; and now I must turn back, and start where I should have begun at first?" As a *fold* ; and should not the tender lambs be taken at once to the safe and happy enclosure ? If they were left outside, they would starve, and die. As a *family* ; and surely, of all places, home is the best spot for the young. They most need comfort and care ; the guidance of a father, and the protection of the family. When the prodigal son was from home, he perished with hunger : when he turned his face homeward, he could say, "In my father's house is bread enough and to spare ; I will arise, and go to my father." Many young people would say, "It was a great pity he ever left his father, and forsook his home." Then, will you follow his example ?

REASON FORTY-THREE.

BECAUSE THE HOPE OF HAPPINESS WITHOUT IT IS
DECEPTIVE.

“ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man ; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”—PROV. xiv. 12.

“ We walk amid delusions here,
Our joys are unsubstantial things,
Though glorious our dreams appear,
They have their quick vanishings ;
They cheat the sense with vain pretence,
The heart that on them leans deceive ;
Delusive all, they rise and fall,
And nought but sad remembrance leave.”

THE hope of happiness is common to man : it is the desire, the instinct of humanity. Children, youth, the middle-aged, the old, the rich, the poor, all desire to be happy. It is sought in a thousand objects ; and many young people have the idea that it is not

to be found in religion—which they regard as a gloomy thing—but in the world. How deceptive! People in every age have grasped at shadows. They have sought happiness in objects where God has not placed it. And hence the experience of the world in general has been disappointment. Solomon had the largest opportunity of experimenting on the world's capability of yielding happiness to the soul. Everything that money could procure, and all that the gaities of the world could yield, were within his reach, and tasted by him; and what was his conclusion? "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Moses made the opposite experiment: and, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, he found the kernel, while Solomon only cracked the shell. Solomon grasped a shadow—Moses the substance. The Creator only can satisfy the cravings of the creature. The fountain of living water can quench the thirst: the broken cistern can hold no water.

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REASON FORTY-FOUR.

BECAUSE THE NEGLECT OF IT HAS ALTERED THE
PROSPECTS OF MANY FOR LIFE.

“For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. . . . Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”—
PROV. i. 29, 31.

“Youth lost in dissipation, we deplore
Through life’s sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;
Our years, a fruitless loss without a prize,
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.”

OUR heavenly Father has marked out a pathway of happiness for all His children ; but thousands, refusing to walk therein, and choosing the hard way of transgressors, defeat the purposes of God, and become the authors of their own misery. It is not too much to affirm that multitudes, by their youthful disobedience, have entirely frustrated the plans and intentions of

Divine Providence. Tens of thousands, who might have been honourable and happy, have sunk into misery and dishonour. Others, who might have risen to positions of usefulness in the Church and the world, have only proved a grief and a curse to all about them. Multitudes, who have been long slumbering in the grave, might still have lived to enjoy and diffuse blessings. Facts are stubborn things ; and the circles of our acquaintance supply too ample illustrations. One daughter is pious, happy, and comfortably settled in life ; and another chose the way of transgressors, and passed through the hospital to an untimely grave. One son is preaching the gospel ; another is in a jail. One brother is a respected citizen, and a worthy member of the Church ; another, a miserable and poverty-stricken drunkard. Truly, sin makes straight ways crooked, right things wrong, and smooth paths rough.

REASON FORTY-FIVE.

BECAUSE IT CONSTITUTES THE GREATEST BEAUTY AND
STRENGTH OF CHARACTER.

“My son, let not them depart from thine eyes : keep sound wisdom and discretion : so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.”—PROV. iii. 21, 22.

“ Thrice happy he whose downy age had been
Reclaim'd by wisdom from the power of sin ;
And, early season'd with the power of truth,
Remembers his Creator in his youth.”

IN youthful piety there is the germ of all moral worth and beauty. Religion includes all that is valuable in principle, all that is lovely in manners, all that is amiable in disposition, all that is advantageous in habit. Disobedience, rudeness, coarseness, snappishness, moroseness, looseness of principle, selfishness, cunning, deception, pride, meanness, wilfulness, be-

long to wicked youth ; and are the fruitful sources of disquietude to themselves, and of distress and injury to others. In pious youth you behold a cheerful obedience to parents ; and this is the element of respectful submission to tutors and governors, and of willing service to masters and employers. Between pious brothers and sisters and companions there will be loving words, sweetness of expression, agreeableness of manner—no quarrelling and brawling, no angry tempers ; but a considerate regard for each other's feelings and rights. Religion is the parent of modesty, humility, gentleness, truthfulness, integrity, order, disinterestedness, conscientiousness, diligence, honour. And that character which is adorned with such virtues is beautiful, and, with such principles, invaluable. Without religion there may be the semblance of many of these excellencies, but in true piety there is the grand reality.

REASON FORTY-SIX.

BECAUSE IT IS A GREAT BLESSING TO THE NATION.

“ Righteousness exalteth a nation : but sin is a reproach to any people.”—PROV. xiv. 34.

“ Yet sometimes *nations* will decline so low
From *virtue*, which is reason, that no wrong
But justice, and some fatal course annexed,
Deprives them of their outward liberty,
Their inward lost.”

DID ever monarch breathe a purer, more ardent, or more enlightened patriotism than the King of Israel? Did ever sovereign comprehend more clearly the elements and essentials of national greatness? What was his highest wish on behalf of his kingdom? “ Rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood : that our sons may be as

plants grown up in their youth ; that our daughters may be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace." A demoralised youth he regarded as the great source of national weakness, disorder, and dishonour : a pious youth, in his estimation, constituted the strength and nobility of a nation. What an example to sovereigns ! And what an encouragement to all religious parents, Sabbath-school teachers, and other pious trainers of youth ! Theirs is a work of highest patriotism. They are supplying the sinews of the nation's strength, and the materials of its real greatness. Luther was of the same opinion with the King of Israel. Writing to the magistrates of Germany, he said, " The prosperity of a town doth not consist in amassing much treasure, building strong walls, raising fine houses, possessing bulwarks and arms. The true welfare of a city, its salvation and its force, lies in its being able to count upon having many learned, grave, upright, well-brought up citizens." The late enlightened Prince Consort, who truly loved the nation, sought to confer upon it the highest boon—a race of religious-trained princes and princesses.

REASON FORTY-SEVEN.

BECAUSE THE CHURCH NEEDS IT.

“Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?”—Ps xciv. 16.

“A soul can scarce be saved alone,
It must, it will its bliss make known :
‘Come,’ it will cry, ‘and you shall see,
What great things God hath done for me.’

“Hundreds that joyful sound shall hear,
Hear with the heart as well as ear :
And then to thousands more proclaim
Salvation in the holy name.”

Yes, she needs it, that the prophecies respecting her may be fulfilled—that the promises belonging to her may be accomplished—that she may realise some of her fondest hopes—that she may greatly swell her ranks—that she may vastly extend her triumphs—

that she may increase her glory. How much of the Church's interests stand connected with the conversion of youth ; or, how very closely and largely does youthful piety stand identified with the spread and triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom ! It is prophesied that "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children." That "instead of the Fathers shall be the children." Children, as well as young men, and maidens, and old men, are to take part in the universal chorus of praise which shall be given to the name of the Lord. Children are to become instruments, in the hands of God, to confound the enemy and the avenger. The Church needs, at this moment, thousands of labourers, with heads full of light and hearts full of love for her different offices, for her Sunday schools, and to go forth as her messengers to distant lands. These must come from the ranks of our youth. Surely, dear young friends, all ministers, pious parents, and other members of churches, will daily pray for the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit on you, that tens of thousands may speedily decide for God.



REASON FORTY-EIGHT.

BECAUSE CONSCIENCE URGES IT.

“Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”—
ROM. ii. 15.

“What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do ;
That teach me more than hell to shun,
That more than heaven pursue.”

EVERY young person knows that when they do right, they have a sweet inward satisfaction ; and when they do wrong, how shy they are—what fears they feel—what inward reproaches are awakened ! They can almost hear a voice which says, “ Don’t do it ; it is wrong ; you will repent it.” Sometimes they regard the voice, and then they feel happy. Conscience is God’s voice and witness ; and, unless it has become

seared or blinded, it always bears a testimony against evil, and in favour of right. So long as the conscience is not warped, its witness always agrees with the Word of God. It echoes the appeals and admonitions of the Book. If, therefore, the Bible says, "Give me thine heart," conscience will repeat the words within the breast. The words meet the eye, or fall upon the ear, and the preacher within speaks them to the heart. Has not conscience spoken to you thousands of times? Has it not urged you powerfully, variously, tenderly, persuasively, sometimes almost angrily, to decide for God? In youth the conscience is most tender: it should then be heard and regarded; and woe will be to the youth who neglects to do what conscience so strongly urges to be done. Does it urge you now? Now obey.

REASON FORTY-NINE.

BECAUSE BLIGHTED YOUTH IS SATAN'S GREAT JOY.

“Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men.”—
ISA. ix. 17.

“Our life hath many a wintry scene,
Deciduous are our sweetest joys ;
And *blossoms* that have loveliest been,
Some withering *demon* oft destroys.”

THREE things are certain in regard to our great adversary the devil :—that it is his study and delight to do mischief on the largest scale—that he hates most what the Divine Being loves best—and that to defeat that purpose which is dearest to God would yield the most malignant satisfaction to him. Now, Satan knows full well if youth be morally blighted the greatest mischief is done. The largest injury is to poison the stream at the fountain : if the twig be bent,

there is the least probability of the tree becoming straight. In youth the capability for usefulness is acquired ; but if that precious opportunity be lost although the individual might be converted in a later life, the qualification for great usefulness is wanting. A blighted youth yields a sterile age. God greatly loves pious youth ; and, therefore, we may be sure Satan greatly hates, and will do all he can to blight them. When youth do not early seek the Lord, our heavenly Father is disappointed respecting them, for what joy it must afford the devil ! Unconverted youth are amongst the most pleasing objects to Satan. Our Saviour especially desires that the little ones should come to Him, be saved, and become lambs in His fold ; and, therefore, the enemy will do all he can to prevent it. Youthful reader, are you an occasional joy to God or the devil ?



“COME, SEE HOW A CHRISTIAN CAN DIE.”

REASON FIFTY.

BECAUSE ONE GOOD REASON CANNOT BE URGED
AGAINST YOUTHFUL PIETY.

“There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.”—PROV. xxi. 30.

“The wise, I here observe,
Are wise towards God, in whose great service still,
More than in that of kings, themselves they serve.”

CAN you give one good reason for neglecting your duty? but it is the duty of all to love God. Can you give one good reason for deferring your own happiness? and certain it is, without the favour of God, there can be no real enjoyment. Can you give one good reason for not loving Jesus? and ought He not to be loved by all? Can you give one good reason for preferring sin before religion? Can you give one

good reason for choosing to be a servant of Satan rather than a servant of God? And rest assured there are but two masters. Can you give one good reason why you should live in a state of uncertainty and danger? And do you not know that the greatest danger is "the wrath of God and everlasting damnation?" And you do not know but that any day or night may be your last. Can you give one good reason for insulting God? And to deny Him your heart, to prefer the world, Satan, and sin, before Him and His service, is a great insult. Can you give one good reason for disobeying the commandments of God, the dictates of your own conscience, and the exhortations of ministers and Christian friends? Can you give one good reason why the thousands of prayers which have been offered on your behalf should be unanswered, through your unwillingness to give your heart to God? Don't sin, don't be unsafe, don't run the risk of missing heaven without one good reason.

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CONCLUSION.

AND now, dear youth, what say you? Perhaps some will exclaim, "I shall not trouble myself about the Fifty Reasons." Youthful reader, that is quite natural, and precisely what Satan would suggest. He does not want you to trouble yourself about religion. But look, would you trouble yourself about your health, your worldly interests and prospects? You would. Then will you not trouble yourself about your soul—your eternal interests—the claims of God—the rights of Jesus—death—heaven and hell? Surely you will not care about the less, and neglect the greater? Does another say, "I don't care about fifty or one hundred Reasons." Young friend, you could not please Satan more than by such a declaration. You don't care about your soul that must live for ever—that is worth more than all Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the world! You don't care about the claims of Jesus,

who shed His blood for you ! You don't care whether your life be a blank or a prize ! You don't care whether you be damned or saved, whether you go to heaven or hell. Satan approves your bravado, angels tremble at your "don't care." "Don't care" has ruined many ; shall it ruin you ? Perhaps another says, "I am convinced—I want to give my heart to God—which is the way ?" Oh, happy youth, who seekest thy soul's welfare, to be saved, and to find thy way to heaven ! Jesus said, "I am the way,"—the way to God, to happiness, to heaven. A way, you know, leads *from, through, and to*, as from Edinburgh through York to London. This gospel way leads from sin, misery, hell, through pardon and holiness to heaven. This is a new, living, pleasant, safe, narrow, straight, right, and only way. Perhaps you ask, "How must I get upon it ?" You see that it is a narrow way, so narrow as not to admit of one sin, and yet broad enough for all repenting sinners. Are you willing to forsake sin ? Then first *think*. "I thought on my ways," says the Psalmist, "and turned my feet into Thy testimonies." When the prodigal son came to himself, when he *thought*, he said, "I *perish with hunger* ! I will arise and go to my

father." You are now prepared for a second step—repentance, which is a *conviction* of sin, producing true sorrow on account of it. How reasonable it is that you should be sorry for having sinned! You say, "That child who has disobeyed parents, teachers, or masters, ought to be sorry for what he has done." True; so should sinners. Think of all your sinful thoughts, words, tempers, and actions—all acts of disobedience—your refusal to love Jesus. You have broken God's law, rejected Christ, and resisted the Holy Spirit. You can put down a million on your slates, but you cannot put down the number of your sins. Do you say, "Against Thee have I sinned. What must I do to be saved?" Then you have to take the final step, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If a criminal in a court of justice was found guilty, could he be pardoned if he said to the judge, "I am very sorry," and tears ran down his cheeks? No. That sorrow would prove his offence, but could not satisfy the law he had broken. Nor can our repentance atone for our sin. But suppose a friend said, "Don't put that man in prison, I will pay his debt," then he could be honourably set free. So with a sinner. He says, "I deserve

to die, but Jesus has died for me. He has paid my debt—His blood has fully satisfied the claims of justice for me—I rest upon Him—humbly expect pardon through His blood—trust on Him as a present, willing, and all-sufficient Saviour. Then you have peace with God, all sin is forgiven, and you are made God's happy child. You are now on the way; and following on in a course of holy obedience, it will lead you to heaven. Will you start for heaven? Will you start now? May the Holy Spirit incline and help you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

“ My worthless heart to gain,
The God of all that breathe
Was found in fashion as a man,
And died a cursed death.

“ And can I yet delay
My little all to give?
To tear my soul from earth away,
For Jesus to receive?

“ Nay, but I yield, I yield;
I can hold out no more:
I sink, by dying love compell'd,
And own Thee Conqueror.”

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